

REMARKS

I. General Comments

Claims 3-8, 12-17, and 21-33 have been examined. Claims 3-8, 12-17, 21-28, and 30-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Examiner has indicated that claims 29 and 33 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for initialing the references listed on form PTO/SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on October 19, 2006.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,798,997 to Hayward et al. ("Hayward")

Claims 3-5 and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hayward. Applicants have canceled these claims without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the Examiner's rejection moot.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Hayward and U.S. Patent No. 5,657,678 to Cohen ("Cohen")

Claims 6-8, 15-17, 21-28, and 30-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hayward in view of Cohen. Applicants have canceled claims 6-8, 15-17, 21, 22, 27, and 31 without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering moot the Examiner's rejection of these claims.

Further, Applicants have amended claim 23 to include all of the features of dependent claim 29, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable over all of the cited prior art. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 30 to include all of the features of dependent claim 33,

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.116
U.S. APPLN. NO. 09/982,749
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE

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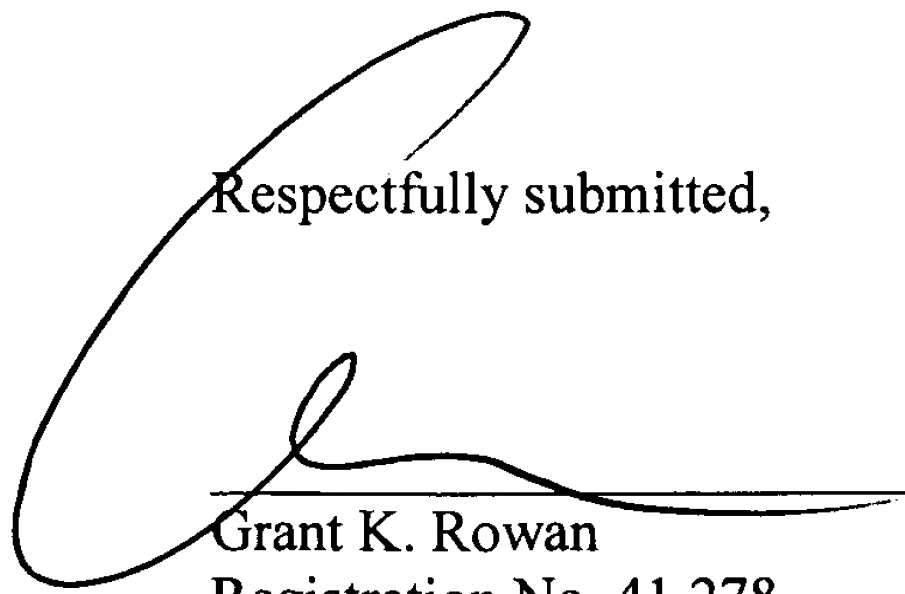
which the Examiner has indicated is also allowable over all of the cited prior art. Also, claims 24-26, 28, and 32 depend on allowable claims 23 and 30, respectively, and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies. Therefore, Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 23-26, 28, 30, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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